

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-02
INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-02 SP-02 SS-15
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R 161636Z MAR 78
FM AMEMBASSY TUNIS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 381
INFO AMEMBASSY ALGIERS
AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY RABAT
AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

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USEEC

PARIS FOR LABATT

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: ELAB, TS
SUBJECT: NEW UGTT SEC GEN ABID GETS ON THE TEAM.

1. TIJANI ABID, NEW SEC GEN OF UGTT, SPOKE OVER WEEKEND
AT LE KEF WHERE HE WAS VISITING WITH INTERIOR MINISTER HANNABLIA.
SPEECH WAS WIDELY REPORTED IN PARTY AND GOVERNMENT-OWNED PRESS,
AND EVIDENTLY REPRESENTS LAUNCHING OF ABID IN INFORMATION
CAMPAIGN CURRENTLY BEING CONDUCTED BY SENIOR PARTY AND GOVERN-
MENT OFFICIALS THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY. IN HIS SPEECH AS REPORTED
IN MEDIA, ABID PUT HIMSELF SQUARELY ON THE SIDE OF REGIME ON
ALL ISSUES.

2. ACCORDING TO NEWSPAPER REPORTS, ABID "UNMASKED THE
SCHEMES OF THOSE WHO WANTED TO PLAY THE GAME OF FOREIGN
FORCES AND TO TURN THE COUNTRY OVER TO ANARCHY AND CHAOS."
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SPEAKING TO TRADE UNIONISTS IN NEIGHBORING COUNTRIES WHO
ARE "ATTEMPTING TO DISTORT THE IMAGE OF THE UGTT AND THE
REPUTATION OF TUNISIA ABROAD," ABID CONFIRMED THAT UGTT
WILL NOT TOLERATE ANY INTERFERENCE IN ITS INTERNAL
AFFAIRS. HE ADDED THAT THOSE PERSONS WHO SOUGHT TO
BRING DOWN THE TUNISIAN REGIME BY USING THE UGTT HAD
FORGOTTEN THE PARTY'S STRENGTH AND VIGILANCE. HE WAS

CRITICAL OF THE ICFTU TO WHICH HE ATTRIBUTED PARTIAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR JAN 26 BECAUSE OF ITS SUPPORT OF THE GENERAL STRIKE. HE ALSO APPEAALED TO ARAB TRADE UNIONISTS TO END THEIR FRATRICIDAL DISPUTES AND TO ADDRESS THEIR ACTIONS TOWARD IMPROVING CONDITIONS OF ARAB WORKERS. HE ADDED UGTT IS SENDING EXECUTIVE BUREAU OFFICIALS TO ALL ARAB COUNTRIES IN SUPPORT OF THIS OBJECTIVE.

3. SPEAKING OF THE SOCIAL-DEMOCRATS' WEEKLY ER-RAI, ABID CRITICIZED THOSE WHO PRESENT THEMSELVES AS DEFEPDERS OF THE POPULAR MASSES. IN REALITY THESE PERSONS HAVE NO "LEGITIMACY", AS THEY BELONG TO THE "HAUTE BOURGEOISE" AND ARE SEEKING ONLY TO ADVANCE THEIR OWN INTEREST, HE SAID. WITH RESPECT TO THE PSD, ABID CLAIMED THAT THERE MUST BE STRONG COOPERATION AND MUTUAL SUPPORT BETWEEN ANY TRADE UNION AND ITS COUNTRY'S POLITICAL REGIME. UGTT DESIRES, HE SAID, TO COLLABORATE WITH THE PARTY "WHICH SHARES OUR ASPIRATIONS AND AIMS."

4. SIMILAR VIEWS ARE BEING EXPRESSED BY VARIOUS OTHER MEMBERS OF UGTT EXECUTIVE BOARD WHO ARE ALSO TRAVELING AROUND THE COUNTRY ADDRESSING PARTY AND UNION GROUPS. MULCAHY

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